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Leroy Garrett, Editor

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MARANATHA

"As the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man."

Matthew 24:27

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The Church of Christ: Yesterday and Today. . .

IS THE CHURCH UNDER LAW?

It is easy for one to overstate his case on this question, whether his answer be yes or no, for the scriptures are inclined to allow one to have it either way, depending on what he makes the question mean. The Bible makes it sufficiently clear that believers are in some way responsible to law, as these passages indicate:

"Help one another to carry these heavy loads, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

"Always speak and act as men who are to be judged under a law of freedom" (Jas. 2:12).

"To win Gentiles who are outside the law, I made myself like one of them, although I am not in truth outside God's law, being under the law of Christ" (l Cor. 7:21).

And 1 Cor. 14:34 requires women not to address the assembly "as the law directs," while Heb. 8:10 anticipates the New Covenant as being distinctive in that "I will set my laws in their understanding and write them on their hearts." Another apostle writes: "The man who looks closely into the perfect law, the law that makes us free, and who lives in its company, does not forget what he hears, but acts upon it" (Jas. 1:25).

Moreover "it is the lot of men to die once, and after death comes judgment," which surely includes believers. How can they be judged without a law? Acts 1 7:31 assures us that "he has fixed the day on which he will have the world judged, and justly judged, by a man of his choosing; of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." How can the Judge, who is Jesus, pass judgment except by a law?

There you have it: Paul says plainly that he was under law to Christ, and he urges us to fulfill the law of Christ. God writes laws on our hearts, and scriptures refer to the perfect law and the law that makes us free. And there is to be a judgment, with all of us held accountable for our response to God's laws. How then can it be asserted that we are not under law?

But the scriptures do precisely that, as the following verses indicate:

"If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law" (Gal, 5:18)

"Thus the law was a kind of tutor in charge of us until Christ should come, when we should be justified through faith; and now that faith has come, the tutor's charge is at an end" (Gal. 3:24-25).

"You are no longer under law, but under the grace of God" (Ro. 6:14).

"For Christ ends the law and brings righteousness for everyone who has faith" (Ro. 10:4).

"While the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

Again we have it: we are not under law. Paul could not have made it plainer. In fact, he says it twice in one chapter (Ro. 6), along with the question "Are we to sin, because we are not under law but under grace? Of course not".

One answer to this is that God took away one law (the Mosaic) and gave us another one (the Christian), which explains how we are still "under law," even though the old system was nailed to the cross. This view is necessarily legalistic, for it places one under the same obligation as were those under Moses: he must keep the law in order to be justified, which no one ever has done or ever will do, except the Son of God himself. And this nullifies the work of Christ as our sin-bearer, for, as the apostle puts it, "if righteousness comes by law, then Christ died for nothing" (Gal, 2:21). Law given by the Messiah is no easier to keep than law given by Moses, for they are both of God. God would be doing little for man's sin by simply removing one legalistic system and replacing it with another. The good news of the gospel is not that we now have law from Jesus instead of from Moses.

If we are "under law" in the sense that justification comes only in keeping it, then we are in bondage no less than those who were under Moses. We would still be in need of a deliverer, and it would be as if the Christ had not come. One can struggle with commands that Jesus has given as much as with those given by Moses or Buddha. He will have his good days and bad days in law-keeping, but he soon stumbles over his own pride and falls on his arrogant neck in his efforts to measure up to the demands of any legalistic system. Paul describes his own agony in law-keeping in Ro. 7, saying in part: "While we lived on the level of our lower nature, the sinful passions evoked by the law worked in our bodies, to bear fruit for death." This is always the story of law-keeping, whether Judaism, Christianity, or Buddhism, it bears *fruit for death.*

So that answer will not do at all. We are in no way under law to Christ as Israel was under law to Moses. God did not nail one legal system to the cross and then give us another to take its place. Paul's words of triumph must also be meaningful to the Church of Christ today: "But now, having died to that which held us bound, we are discharged from the law, to serve God in a new way, the way of the spirit, in contrast to the old way, the way of a written code" (Ro. 7:6).

Another answer is that of the "libertarian," who insists that law is no longer a frame of reference, no longer relevant to the believer. Grace has set him free to the point of turning him against any and all law. He is really an *antinomian* (one who opposes law) in that he sees no law at all in God's plan for the believer, and he is inclined to blame all the ills of the church upon concern for laws and commands.

This is equally objectionable, for the scriptures always present a lofty concept of the law of God. Jesus said that he had come to fulfill it, not to destroy it. Paul calls the law both good and spiritual, and even says “in my inmost self delight in the law of God” (Ro. 7:22). Nor could an antinomian ever liken the law to a tutor that brings us to Christ or include it as one of God’s splendid gifts to Israel.

What then is to be the attitude of the church? We are to rejoice in God’s grace through Christ, which delivers us from the *bondage* of the law, and yet we are to be law-abiding believers, realizing that God commands us through Christ just as he commanded through Moses. We are not *under* law in that law-keeping saves us, but we do *have* laws that the Spirit of God helps us to obey. As law-abiding believers we are always conscious of the weakness of law. “What the law could never do, because our lower nature robbed it of all potency, God has done: by sending his own Son in a form like that of our sinful nature, and as a sacrifice for sin, he has passed judgment against sin within that very nature, so that the commandment of the law may find fulfillment in us, whose conduct, no longer under the control of our lower nature, is directed by the Spirit” (Ro. 8:3-4).

We are not, then, under law as Israel was, shut up to a system that saves only through a personal righteousness that is impossible. But we do have law or laws (which would include some application of the Old Covenant scriptures) that we are to keep. But in ourselves (“our lower nature” as Paul would put it) we cannot keep these laws anymore than Israel could keep their laws. The big difference is God’s grace, given through Jesus, which helps us to fulfill the law in our own lives. The Holy Spirit is our helper, so that, “directed by the Spirit the law may find fulfillment in us.”

An illustration may prove helpful. There are many, many laws of God in the New Covenant scriptures. A few of them are:

“Flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6: 18).

“Call down blessings on your persecutors — blessings, not curses” (Ro. 12: 14).

“Always treat others as you would like them to treat you” (Mt. 7:12). Here Jesus says this command is the law.

“Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them” (Col. 2:19).

“Every person must submit to the supreme authorities” (Ro. 13:1).

These are as much. law as is the command in Lev. 19:18: “You shall not put on a garment woven with two kinds of yarn.” And one is no more likely to keep perfectly the laws of the New Covenant scriptures than those of the old Mosaic system. The law is weak, not because it is dependent upon sinful man for fulfillment. And the weakness applies to any law, Jewish, Chirstian or moral. No man can keep law, any law, perfectly. This is why we must have Jesus and his indwelling Spirit.

As a law-abiding believer I take seriously the command to love my wife and not treat her harshly or the one that tells me to call down blessings on my persecutors instead of curses. But even with my kind of wife and enemies I cannot keep such laws exactly. Due to the weakness of my lower nature I sometimes sin in these respects. But because of God's grace, because of what Jesus has done for me, the law is fulfilled in me anyway. I endeavor to keep all God's laws, for they are good and spiritual, but I have no illusion about being able to measure up to them perfectly. And so I know I cannot be saved that way. I keep them because I love God and wish to please Him, and I believe that such laws are for my good, that God's purposes are realized through them. And when I place my life under the control of the Holy Spirit rather than my lower nature, it is as if I were keeping the laws perfectly, for through the Spirit the Lord himself is in me and with me and frees me from the harshness of the law. And so Paul's conclusion is my own: "There is no condemnation for those who are united with Christ Jesus, because in Christ Jesus the life-giving law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death" (Ro. 8:1-2).

The Church therefore is to see law as Paul saw it. Law serves us in that it exposes the sin that we might otherwise ignore (Ro. 7:7). Law kills us, causing us to seek help beyond ourselves (Ro. 7:9-10). Yet it really isn't law that kills us, but the sin within us that the law arouses (Ro. 7:12-13). And so the law is holy and just and good, Paul adds. It is our sinful flesh that is the villain, not law. In fact, it was God's intention that the law make us holy, but this was impossible due to our sinful nature. So Jesus did for us what the law by itself could not do, and so fulfilled the law in us. We can therefore speak of the "fulfillment of the law" as well as "freedom from the law". God thus makes us righteous through the fulfilled law within us, which is Christ's work in our lives.

Phillips' translation of Ro. 8:2-5 catches this truth beautifully:

"The Law never succeeded in producing righteousness — the failure was always the weakness of human nature. But God has met this by sending his own Son Jesus Christ to live in that human nature which causes the trouble. And, *while Christ was actually taking upon himself the sins of men, God condemned that sinful nature.* So that we are able to meet the Law's requirements, so long as we are living no longer by the dictates of our sinful nature, but in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit."

Do we therefore now keep the Law? Yes, by the help of the Spirit. This is how God makes us spiritual. The law and the Spirit are not to be set over against each other, for Paul makes it clear that "the law is spiritual, but I am carnal." It is rather that the indwelling Spirit fulfills the law in us.

And it is the law that makes us moral, contrary to the thinking of the new morality and existentialism. The "just requirement of the law" is fulfilled in us when we are united with Jesus. God thus uses law to make us the kind of people He wants us to be, and through the Spirit he enables us so that the law can do its work in us. This is Christian morality. One

reason the church of today is lacking in moral sensitivity is that it has been influenced by the antinomianism that is infesting so much of modern thought. Law has come upon hard times in the church and in the world. But law is of God and it is intended to make us good. Looseness in attitude toward God's injunctions against lying, lechery, and lasciviousness causes us to smile at streaking and be tolerant of wickedness in high places. No nation or church can be moral that takes a passive attitude toward the law.

Like the great apostle. then, the church is to "delight in the law" in its inmost self. In recognizing that we are no more able to keep the law by our own strength and goodness than were those under Moses, we are bearing witness to our need of God. The man who can cry out as Paul did, "Wretched man that I am," is one who realizes that he needs a helper. And that is precisely the mission of the Spirit in our hearts, to serve as our Helper. We therefore have our answer to the question that Paul asked in his desperation, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" And that answer must always be, "I thank God there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is not from law that Jesus delivers us, but from the bondage of the law."

Is the church then under law? Yes and no. Yes, in that God's law is always relevant and that we are to be law-abiding for our own morality and spirituality, and so God makes us obedient to the law through the Helper who dwells in us as a heavenly guest. No, in that we are discharged from the law's bondage and tyranny and are reliant instead upon the grace of God. So in this sense we are not under law but under grace. It is a question of what we are bound to. No longer are we bound to the law, but in being bound to Christ we are law-abiding and look to him to fulfill in us all the just requirements of the law.—*the Editor*

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DOES PAUL SAY THERE MUST BE DIVISIONS?

This question was brought home to me recently when a speaker at the Preachers-Elders Workshop in Abilene, referring to 1 Cor. 11:19, argued that divisions are necessary in order to keep the church pure. He put it stronger than that, even insisting that Paul is commanding us to divide the congregation, driving out those in error, in order to be faithful. I had suppressed this unlovely thought only to have it revived by a letter from a devoted sister in the Lord, who was telling me of a separation of a number of members from her congregation, people who left out of concern for the changes that had occurred. Then she wrote: "The members who remain are truly delightful and inspirational (Paul did say, didn't he, that 'there must be divisions among you so that the genuine can be known?)"

One only needs to read 1 Cor. 11:19 in several of the versions to see that there is ground for such an interpretation, even though the Abilene speaker went entirely too far with his deductions. The *New English Bible* reads, “Dissensions are necessary if only to show which of your members are sound,” and the *King James* says, “There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be manifest among you.” The *Revised Standard* renders it, “There must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized,” while *The Jerusalem Bible* puts it, “There must no doubt be separate groups among you, to distinguish those who are to be trusted.”

If the apostle is really saying what he appears to be saying, the conclusion has to be that divisions are a means of accomplishing God’s intention for the church and that we can hardly expect to be without them. Is Paul really saying that the faithful in a congregation become evident only in the face of faction? Must we have the sectarian spirit on the part of some in order to show the fidelity of those who can be trusted?

This would be strange teaching for one who has listed heresies (sects) among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20) and who had already told the same church that “there are to be no schisms among you (Col. 1:10). Would he now be saying that divisions are to he expected after all (though perhaps not approved *per se),* for this is how we can tell who is faithful and who is not? And would he dare to say that we must have sects, even to the point of driving the “unfaithful” away, in order to be the true church?

What then is he saying and what does he mean?

It is my view that Phillips stands almost alone in his understanding of what the apostle is saying. It is rare for me to reject the majority of the scholars and stand with the minority. But I believe Phillips’ translation catches the meaning of Paul’s language better than those quoted above and I will explain why. But first his rendition of 1 Cor. 11:19, along with the previous verse.

For first, when you meet for worship I hear that you split up into small groups, and I think there must be truth in what I hear. For there must he cliques among you or your favorite leaders would not be so conspicuous.

The meaning is entirely different from the other versions. Schonfield’s *Authentic New Testament* is close to Phillip’s: “Obviously there must be some variations among you, that those who are particularly worthy among you may be distinguished.” It is a question of who does the ap*proving* of those “which are approved” (KJV), or who does the *recognizing* of “those who are genuine” (RSV). If it refers to God recognizing or approving the faithful, made evident by the sectarian spirit of others, then the *King James* and the other versions are right. If it refers to those who have elevated their own leaders, then Phillips (and perhaps Schonfield if we read him right) has the right interpretation.

The Greek term *dokimos,* used here for "those which are approved," does not resolve the difficulty, for it is used of approval of both God (Tim. 2:15) and man (1 Cor. 16:3). As every interpreter knows, we are left to the context and to the treatment of the subject in other scriptures in our search for truth.

The *King James* rendition is put in its best light by Moffatt, who in his commentary translates the words, "There must be parties among you, if genuine Christians are to be recognized," for he refers to the fact that Paul has already condemned partyism, and he insists that he is doing so no less in this passage. Paul is using irony, says Moffatt, as if to say that misbehavior is inevitable, human nature being what it is, and so God can even take sectism and use it to His glory by allowing it to make it clear *who* the faithful are. And so he has Paul saying something like: "It's consoling, at any rate, to think that such disorders show who is loyal and truly reverent!"

Surely the context shows that the apostle could never *seriously* suggest that partyism is anything more than an horrendous evil. The Corinthians sought to form sects around men, whether Cephas or Apollos or Paul or Christ, and the faction that said, "We are of Christ," were as sectarian as the rest of them. Paul had to say to them, "Surely Christ has not been divided among you!" He explained to them that so long as they said things like "I belong to Paul," they were *of the flesh* and could not be addressed as spiritual people (1 Cor.3:1). Never would he, therefore, see something as carnal as partyism as having any beneficial effect at all upon the body of Christ. And I do not see him using irony as much as I see him speaking directly to the condition that existed. I would paraphrase him something like this.

I hear that in your assemblies you are terribly divided (or schismatic) in your competition over men. This being the case, which I have no reason to doubt, you must also be torn asunder by partyism (heresies), for this always happens when men are exalted over Christ.

Or I would translate the sentence in question as: *It has to follow that you are split into sects; otherwise we would not be hearing so much about those that you exalt.*

Paul is definitely using two different words in describing the evil at Corinth. He hears that there were *schismata* (schisms), meaning divisions or tears, such as a crack in a wall or a rip in a garment. This would mean that the congregation is rent and torn by strife, but not necessarily broken apart. Since there is schism (and he does not question the rumors), then there is sure to come an open breach in the form of sects, which is the word *haireseis.* Cracks in the dam will eventually lead to the wall breaking apart, he is saying. One leads to the other. And since they have made such a big deal out of some of their leaders, splitting up over this one or that one, it is predictable enough that it will get even worse, so that what was once the Body of Christ will be a bunch of warring sects, completely separated from each other and competing with one another. This is what I see him saying.

All this notwithstanding, the church through the centuries has behaved as if the scriptures do indeed command us to divide into sects. The brother in Abilene stated what our people have long practiced. We must divide the church in order to confirm our loyalty. It is better to split a church rather than allow diversity of viewpoint over the millennium or the organ. Many congregations have started with the rationale that "the faithful" must leave the main group and start a loyal church. And we can always quote Paul, "There must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized." And thus the one who "sows discord among brothers," which the Bible says is one of the seven things that God hates is made a defender of the faith and a preserver of the truth, when in fact he is often no more than a party hero.

And so we must also demur from our sister's view that a separation of a part of the Body is a confirmation that those who remain are the genuine ones. It indicates no such thing. Nor does it take factions to identify those who are approved of God. Congregations should be planted, organized, nourished in the faith, and pass on from this earth to become a part of the family of God in heaven without there ever being a schism or a sect of any description. And all this time God will not be confused as to who the faithful are. He does not need an occasional faction so as to identify his true children! It would come nearer being the other way: *factions make it clear who the sectarians are!—The Editor*

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FROM COMPULSION TO COMPASSION

Part of the nostalgia that is sweeping our country generally is evident also in the way some of the denominational leaders are looking back into their history for better days. This is probably a good thing, for the past is always prologue. This journal has sought to encourage this in regard to our present mission. Prof. Albert C. Outler, professor of church history at Southern Methodist University, has been doing some of this in reference to John Wesley. In doing so he says some things that are worth repeating.

He tells of how Wesley's ministry was at first barren and that it might have fallen into swift oblivion had it not been for a dramatic change that came in his life. For 36 years Wesley preached with almost no visible results. He was orthodox, zealous, self-righteous and overweening, Outler observes, and of course evangelical, but still fruitless. But a decade later the little man emerged at the head of the most effective mass movement in the 18th century. He inspired social reform and shook the Establishment to its foundations, leading a revival that unleashed immense spiritual forces. He is an example of a weak man becoming strong.

Outler sees the transformation as something of a mystery to explain, but he comes up with ideas that serve as at least part of the answer, and he sees these qualities in Wesley's life as relevant to the needs of the church in our time. The one that impresses me most is his description of Wesley's "conversion from compulsion to compassion as his dominant emotion." This was a change from a harsh zealot of God's judgment to a winsome witness to God's grace, from a censorious critic to an effective pastor, from arrogance to humility.

Does this point not speak to us? Many of us have long had a religion that is more compulsive than compassionate. We *compulsively* go to church, read our Bibles, rear our families, and go to work. Even our contacts with others, whether in the sharing of our faith or in acts of charity, are often motivated more by a sense of duty than from compassion. Our children sometimes respond to our urgings with a "Do I have to?," while we are left wishing they could be motivated by love and concern rather than by mandate. God's children are often like that, for we seem to do things because it is expected of us or because we are commanded to do so. How often are we propelled by compassion? And yet it ranks first in Paul's list of the garments that befit the saint: "Put on the garments that suit God's chosen people, his own, his beloved: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience" (Co!. 3:12). And it is here that we are most like Jesus, for this is the word used to describe so much of what he did. Again and again the scriptures tell us that "When the Lord saw ... he had compassion."

Outler describes a zealous and diligent Wesley, but still a vapid one. He did not have power until God's grace really touched his heart. Zeal, passion rhetorical overkill are not enough for effective evangelism, Outler says. Rather than flinging the gospel at them like a soteriological brickbat, Wesley learned the grace of compassion, the pity of Christ's self-giving love.

The Greek and Hebrew meanings behind *compassion* in our English Bibles are most revealing. It means *to have yearning bowels, pity, mercy, to show mildness, kindness, suffering with,* and in one instance *display moderation.* Compulsion is so different, for it suggests coercion and constraint. Let us be impelled by compassion rather than by compulsion. It is a matter of whether religion has reached beyond the head to the heart and from there to the guts. The idea of "bowels of mercy" really described compassion in a day when it was believed that man's basic drives and feelings are centered in his guts. And that has been our problem, as it was Wesley's for a time, we have acted more from mind and will than from heart and guts.

From compulsion to compassion ... I can buy that even to the point of suggesting it become our hallmark in these days of transformation. We have been *right* long enough, and God knows we have been all too *scriptural, faithful,* and *loyal* all these years. Let's be compassionate for awhile! From a religion of compulsion to a religion of compassion. I like that.

Compulsive religion is a religion of fear and uncertainty. It lends itself to regimentation, systems, and authority. It is uncomfortable in the presence of grace, forbearance, forgiveness and love, unless these can somehow be tied to law, which the compulsive mind finds more tangible. One can remain rigid in the face of law, but hardly in the presence of mercy. This was at the heart of our Lord's conflict with the Pharisees. They sought merit through compulsive law-keeping, while he taught mercy through God's grace. Their religion reached only the lips, his the heart. Their compulsion led them to withdraw from the world, forming themselves into a little sect that would not even speak to others. His compassion led him to involvement with those around him, the untouchables and the outcasts as well as proper folks.

"Sometimes it is those who can see the darkest shadows that recognize more clearly the most brilliant virtues. Arthur Schopenhauer, the great philosopher of pessimism, has described the evils of this world as few men have, which always makes him a favorite on the college campus. Life is evil because life is strife, he asserted, and this is evident in all of nature, from the insects and animals that prey upon each other to the *homo sapiens* that behave toward each other like wolves. He saw the bulldog-ant of Australia as typical of life's evil conflict, for when it is cut in two a battle begins between head and tail. The head bites the tail and the tail stings the head until they are dead or are carried away by other ants. He saw every biography as a history of suffering, and noticed that Dante got all his materials for a description of hell from life on earth. If one were serious in his claim to optimism, Schhopenhauer would invite him to tour prisons, hospitals, torture-chambers, slave-kennels, and battle fields.

And yet the famous pessimist saw compassion in the human heart as gloriously beautiful. This is because it is unexpected and unpredictable in a world of cruel competition. One's life is a string of misfortunes both great and small, he observed, which he keeps to himself since he realizes that others are too concerned with their own troubles to have any sympathy for him. If anything, others will take satisfaction in his misery, pleased that they are for the moment spared his lot. So when compassion is shown it is the nearest to the divine that man can attain.

Being an atheist, Schopenhauer never found an answer to the problem of suffering, but it is to his credit that he exalted compassion as the noblest of all human impulses. It is an indictment on the modern church when an atheist, lost in a sea of pessimism, sees more grace in compassion than believers do. The truth is that an austere orthodoxy often means more in the modern church than a heart of compassion. We must become known more for our mercy than for our censure.

A man who sees compassion amidst the human predicament, atheist though he be, may well speak of brotherhood even better than the rest of us. It is egoism, Schopenhauer avowed, that causes one to make a distinction between his own interests and those of

others. When the high vision of brotherhood comes to one "he recognizes in all beings his own inmost and true self, and regards the infinite suffering of all suffering beings as his own, and takes on himself the pain of the whole world."

This is what made Wesley a great preacher. He moved from compulsion to compassion when Jesus touched his life deeply. This happens to us all when we really catch the vision of God's grace. This is my heart's desire for all our people. From compulsion to compassion - the great transformation.—*The Editor*

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ON CALLING A MAN BROTHER

We can all surely agree that Jesus came to make men brothers, and that is such a glorious truth. "When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun," 2 Cor. 5:17 tells us, and we can believe that all who make up this new creation are *brothers.* When God claims a man as His son, I can claim him as my brother.

And so we recognize this in part by *calling* a man brother. No one argues that we make a man our brother by calling him such, and but few, if any, would contend we *must* call him brother if he is our brother. He might be called by his first name, such as *John,* or even by his last, such as *Mr. Smith*, and in recent years we have been "brothering" everybody less. And it could be that we have made something of a title of it, especially in the case of preachers, with something like *Brother Smith* becoming a compound proper noun. It seems somewhat different from *John Smith, our brother.*

But this is hardly a big deal either way you take it. It is a different kind of problem that I have in mind. We still have lots of folk who use *brother* in a canonical way, applying it or withdrawing it on the basis of whether the person in question is approved by the party, to put it bluntly. Some of our folk call everyone brother who is in what we denominate as the Church of Christ, of whatever persuasion, but no one else, not even one in the Christian Church or the Disciples of Christ. Others take a narrower view, calling only those brother who are within *their* fellowship, or what they might call the faithful church. Then there is that emerging element among us, which might be described as "the free spirits," who are pleased to call all those brother who make up the Christian world, whether Trueblood, or Schaeffer, or Keith Miller. Or else they hardly use the term at all, disdaining it as a religious relic, and so put their relationships on a first name basis or the more formal *Mister, Doctor,* or what.

We can probably agree that whether or not we call each other brother in addressing one another is not so important, but why we do or do not is very important indeed. Some can not only be brash but even cruel in their use of Mister when it is evident that the one referred to is being excluded. On occasion I have been called Mister Garrett almost as if I were being cursed, though ordinarily that way of being addressed is most acceptable. In party circles to be called Mister, while all others are called brother, is a way of saying, "You are not OK."

The line drawn between whether one "brothers" a man or does not is usually unclear, but it has to do with his doctrinal purity. One sister that I chanced to meet on the street sometime back was aghast a t all the things she had heard about me, including my questionable occupation of philosophy teacher. "I don't know whether to call you brother or not," she told me, rather anxiously. Bless her, she was measuring me by herself, and since I did not conform to her view of a faithful church member, I was really *out, not OK.* For her to call one "brother" meant that he is endorsed and accepted. I assured her that she was my sister in the Lord because she was in Jesus, and that I loved her as blood kin, and that there wasn't much she could do about it, whether she called me "brother" or not. The next time I saw her she called me "brother", explaining that her preacher told her that I was a brother all right, though an erring brother, and so could be called "brother". But I think that is cheating. To get it perfectly right such ones should address me *Brother-in-Error Garrett!*

But there is a footnote to be added about that dear sister. Buried deeply in partyism, religion had long been oppressive to her, and she sought peace in the confines of one of our straightest sects. But 10, she at last turned to Jesus and to the peace that he allows, and she now wears a smile that reflects that joy that so long eluded her. And she has discovered that she has many more brothers than she realized, just as many as God has sons.

Maybe this little story has a lesson. Rather than turning our backs upon our sectarian brothers, which may be just as sectarian, *let's love the sectarianism out of them!*

Maybe this is what Alexander Campbell was trying to do in his response to his antagonist of many years, Jeremiah Jeter, a prominent Baptist minister of Richmond, Virginia, who obliged his generation with an extended review of Campbell's teaching, entitled *Campbellism Examined.* Jeter was hard on Campbell, referring to him as. "a disputant, so ready, adroit, and sarcastic," and went on to write 50 pages on "Campbellism in its chaos."

In the exchanges between them everything was "Mr. Campbell" and "Mr. Jeter," which was a common practice. But in his review of Jeter's essay, Campbell says: "Our brother Jeter - brother, did I say? Yes, and I will not erase it - our brother Jeter..." Campbell realized that God had sons outside the Restoration Movement, and he acknowledged that Baptists had believed in Jesus and obeyed him in baptism and were therefore his brothers.

Campbell disagreed with some *within* the Movement as much as he did with Jeter, one of those being Barton W. Stone, who had views on the preexistence of Christ that bore similarity to the old Arian heresy, views that concerned Campbell no little. They too corresponded at length, doing a bit of in-fighting in an effort to work out the differences. One of Campbell's letters begins with: "Brother Stone: I will call you brother because you once told me that you could conscientiously and devoutly pray to the Lord Jesus Christ as though there was no other God in the universe than he." Stone responded with the same brotherly felicitation.

The important thing here is not that men who differ are addressing each other as brothers, but that they are *accepting* each other as brothers. To treat each other as brothers is the big deal, however little or much we may actually use the term.

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BAPTISTS AS BROTHERS

This notion that we can't even recognize a Baptist as a brother is an arrogance not original to our Movement. In fact it was some Texas preachers two generations back who stirred up the "rebaptism controversy" in which they insisted that Baptists be reimmersed to be part of us, to the consternation of David Lipscomb, editor of the Gospel Advocate, and other Tennessee leaders. The *Firm Foundation* was started to promote this sectarian practice. The idea is still widely prevalent that Baptists are not Christians until they are rebaptized to our satisfaction and become part of us.

The truth is that a large part of our Movement in the early days was made up of Baptists. Phillip S. Fall, pastor of First Baptist Church in Nashville, influenced by Alexander Campbell, brought his entire church, save five members, into the Movement, and it never occurred to anyone that they should be immersed again. Raccoon John Smith led scores of Baptist churches and thousands of their members into the Restoration, but there is no record of any of them ever being reimmersed, including Raccoon, who never thought of himself as having "left" anything. When the Baptists tried to run him off, he would say with a smile, "I love you too much to leave you!"

Campbell was adamant on this subject, insisting that there is no cause for anyone being immersed a second time unless he was void of faith at the time of the act.

This was the attitude toward the Baptists through most of the 19th century. In 1889 James A. Harding, with David Lipscomb as his moderator, debated J. B. Moody, prominent Baptist, for 16 days to vast audiences in Nashville. It was on the design of baptism, as to whether one is saved before or at the time of baptism. While Harding and Lipscomb differed with Moody on the question, there was no question raised as to whether

the Baptists were Christians. Since it is God who does the saving, Harding could easily believe that God normally accepts one as saved at the time of baptism even if that person supposes he is saved before that. After all, immersion has meaning only in reference to one's *faith* in a Person, not in reference to his *knowledge* of an act. If we contend that salvation is a matter of knowledge and understanding of this or that rather than of faith in Jesus, we may all be in trouble.

Anyway, brother Harding repeatedly called J. B. Moody his brother in his debate. When David Lipscomb was asked if he had any brothers among the sects, he assured his questioner that he did. As to whether such ones should leave the sects, Lipscomb acknowledged that they might well do so, but that they had the problem of having nowhere to go since all others are as sectarian as themselves or more so. One can imagine Lipscomb's disappointment when Austin McGary and others in Texas began to sectarianize the Movement by insisting that baptized believers be rebaptized, thus de-christianizing a large segment of the Body of Christ. As Steve Eckstein puts it in his *History of the Churches of Christ in Texas:* "David Lipscomb decried the action of a few preachers who argued the necessity of rebaptism, particulary those baptized by the denominations. He contended that when a man had believed in Christ, repented of his sins, and had been baptized in order to obey God, he was then a Christian. Lipscomb strongly affirmed that any preacher who would require such a person to be rebaptized would be 'very presumptuous in the sight of God.'" (p. 254)

It is enough to say that we have hardly taken brotherhood seriously enough. The injunction in scripture to "love the brotherhood" does not mean to love those of our own party. We are first to *accept* all of God's children as our brothers, and then to *treat* them as brothers. I hear our people sometimes say, with a touch of levity, in those instances when they call a man brother who might not be: "Well, if I miss him in Christ, I'll catch him in Adam."

I have no special interest in the brotherhood of Adam, but I see it as tragic when we deliberately "miss" and reject those who are in the brotherhood of Christ. What is more tender than to call a man brother and to mean it? As for him who is in Adam, what is more loving than to lay a hand on his shoulder and say, "I want you as my brother."—*the Editor*

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A GREAT MINISTRY WITHOUT MIRACLES

"*And they said, John did no miracle.* (Jn. 10:41).

There is a flair for the miraculous these days. Perhaps it has always been so. The scribes and Pharisees insisted that Jesus should do a miracle for them, as if it took that to authenticate his ministry. But the Lord responded: "It is an evil and unfaithful generation that asks for a sign (or miracle) The only sign it will give is the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Mt. 12:39). The point seems to be that when the people of Nineveh saw Jonah alive in their streets (after the report of his death at sea), they repented with vigor. He was a *risen* prophet, and that was enough for them. And so no generation needs anything more than *the One who* is *greater than Jonah* and his resurrection. Sign-seekers and miracle-hunters may be guilty of more than missing the point, for they may even fall under the Lord's judgment of "evil and unfaithful."

Some have been making too much of the question as to whether miracles have ceased, for miracles simply are not all that important to start with. I favor an attitude of taking them or leaving them, whatever God decides in any generation, and not of making a big deal of them. We have ample evidence in scripture that one's ministry can be both full and great without miracles. Not only is there an economy of miracle on the part of those who did exercise such power, with both Jesus and his apostles using such gifts with some restriction, but some of the most beautiful ministries were completely void of miracle. John the Immerser is the most notable instance.

Some critics of the times of Jesus, like old Renan of two generations ago, have claimed that the emotional climate among the Jews was such that no prophet would have been listened to who was not a thaumaturgist. And so, Renan asserted, Jesus yielded to this temper and became a miracle-worker. But that conclusion is doubtful, for Jesus was not all that concerned for the miraculous. He did of course perform miracles, but this was not the heart of his mission, and it is evident that the miraculous was sparingly employed. Even his healings touched but a fraction of those who might have been healed, and sometimes in large gatherings (such as at the pool in John 5) his healing power touched but one. The *heart* of Jesus' ministry was teaching about the kingdom of God. So, Renan not withstanding, it cannot be said that Jesus read the temper of the times and therefore entered the scene as a thaumaturgist.

Renan's premise is also wrong, for John's ministry proves that a prophet could not only be heard, but also have a tremendous impact, without being a miracle man. The Immerser stirred the whole country from center to circumference, drawing people into the wilderness to hear him, without any attending miracles. While he was not the first Jew to immerse, he was the first to do so in the name of the emerging Messiah, thus introducing the approaching kingdom. He prepared a people for Jesus by persuading them to turn from their sins and accept the principles of the new order. He had marked success. "They flocked to him from Jerusalem, from all Judea, and the whole Jordan valley, and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mt. 3:6). Even though Elijah

did perform miracles, Jesus attributes to John the old prophet's likeness: "Ever since the coming of John the Baptist the kingdom of Heaven has been subjected to violence and violent men are seizing it. For all the prophets and the Law foretold things to come until John appeared, and John is the destined Elijah, if you will but accept it" (Mt. 11:13). In the same context Jesus calls John *great*, none greater in fact. If one can be another Elijah and the greatest of the great without the support of miracles, then they may not be as important as some of us have supposed.

And John's ministry lived on, far beyond his own martyrdom. It would have cheered his heart to have known that those his own hands had immersed became the charter members of the Church of Christ on the day of Pentecost. Indeed, the interpretation cannot be allowed that says John's disciples were again immersed at Pentecost, for this would undo the work that John did. He immersed believers for the remission of their sins in the name of the coming One, and it is amiss to suppose they had to be baptized again. True, some of John's disciples were reimmersed in Acts 19, but this was after Jesus' baptism had displaced John's, whose was valid up to Pentecost. After all, Acts 2 does not say that 3,000 were immersed that day, but that many were added to the Body. "As many as received the word" were baptized, and these, added to the number that John had prepared, totaled about 3,000. And John carved the first Church of God out of a mountain of sinful men without a single miracle. He stuck with the basics by preaching repentance.

The beloved prophet appeared in the rough with his clothes made of camel's hair and with a diet of locusts and wild honey. He did not come to dazzle men's eyes by a display of superhuman power, which is the fetish of small minds. He was not clever, nor is he remembered for his brilliant gifts. But he stands out in history as true. He was no phony. His ministry rested on character. Reared in the wilderness, perhaps by the Essenes, his mind was disciplined as much as his body was toughened, and he thought in terms of history. God would soon be using him, and one day the call came loud and clear. His mission may have been profound but it was not complex. *Reform* was his cry, which broke the long silence of prophecy, *for the reign of God* is *near.*

No froth or foam. No veneer or stucco. No hay or stubble. He was for real and his message. snapped through Judean desert like a whip. He did not heal the sick and call down fire from heaven, but his message burned into the hearts of people as if it were coals of fire.

We need what John had. Sincerity and determination, and of course truth. And we need his sense of sin, his heroic spirit, his generous and modest temper, and his self-effacing disposition. The greatest of the prophets could say, "He must increase but I must decrease." He was a man of conviction and he spoke his mind, indifferent either to wealth or position. It cost him his life, but his influence lives on and on. And all this without miracle.

I have no quarrel with the brother who seeks after signs and wants the more elegant gifts of healing. Nor am I saying that there can be no such things in the church today. But I am left uneasy by all the preoccupation for the subjective. Our young men (and a few older ones) want to dream dreams, and our young women want to see visions. More than a few are on the verge of reading handwriting on the wall as well as in the sacred text. In one assembly where I sat the speaker paused to say, "The Spirit is telling me that there is someone in this audience with a serious problem," as he proceeded to pull things out of thin air as well as from the Book. One brother called another one long distance to tell that he had a prophecy for him. And holding hands in the dark reaches the place in some circles that as much comes from the ether waves as from the scriptures.

If a brother *does* have a gift of healing or whatever, I will rejoice in his ministry, and I certainly will not discourage him. But let him pursue it quietly as unto the Lord and to the glory of God; and let him not leave the impression that it takes the miraculous to make for an effective ministry. He must also guard against leaving the impression that if one is grievously ill then God will heal. In such cases God may choose to minister *in* the suffering, enriching and ennobling character so that it will be better adapted to the rich blessings that await the soul.

And why can't we have more of plain old John, who did not bother with miracles, gifted as he was? Let's stay with the Book, drinking deeply of its great truth. Let's share with the world the wonders of the Word more than the marvels of tongue or sign. Let's preach the gospel and teach the Word. Signs are confusing and tongues are bewildering, but the Word strengthens the soul and gives life and light. When we stand before people let's open the Book and give its meaning, like Ezra as he restored the fortunes of Israel. Let out voices be lifted up like that of John the Immerser, preaching repentance and remission of sins. This is God's appointed way for us to be great in the kingdom of God.—*the Editor*

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OFFICE NOTES

Dave Sullins (1031 Stuart Dr., Amarillo, Tx. 79104, 806-373-9150) writes of Carl Ketcherside coming to his congregation, May 1 5-17, to both speak and share in open forums. You can write Dave for further information. This is of added significance since Dave's congregation is of the non-class persuasion.

Mrs. Linda Adams (524 Ridgecrest Rd., Edmond, OK. 73034) is concerned for her friend who is partially disabled due to a brain tumor. The young lady's mind and speech are intact and she is able to do some work, but Linda feels that she needs moral support and friendship, part of which might come through correspondence. She is also hopeful that someone might read this who is qualified to counsel with her friend, or knows of some organization dedicated to helping such ones. The girl has a master's degree in library science and is presently employed in library work for the blind, but she needs support that only Christian love can bring. Write Linda if you would like to make the contact for Jesus' sake.

Dwain Evans of Houston, who has long been closely acquainted with Camp Shiloh, says this is the most deserving work of its kind among Churches of Christ. Dr. Robert Whitaker of the social work department at ACC has also hailed it as the most effective he has ever seen. Much of its work is with poor blacks from the ghettoes of New York, whose servants are young whites from Texas and Tennessee churches, who themselves have quite an experience. If you are looking for an appropriate place to use some of the Lord's wealth, we suggest you investigate Camp Shiloh by sending for their story. Address: Shiloh, Inc., Box 627, Mendham, N.J. 07945.

Some paperbacks by John R. W. Stott are especially worthwhile, highly recommended: *Your Mind Matters* (.95), *Guard the Gospel* (1 .95), *Only One Way* (2.25). *Basic Introduction to the New Testament* (1 .50), *Men Made New* (1.50), *One People* (1.50), and *Christ the Controversialist* (2.50). You would do well to have these inexpensive volumes, for they are highly readable and informative, and extremely valuable to the restoration mind.

Barclay's new volume, *Daily Celebration*, has a few paragraphs of down-home talk about life and values for every day in the year, but you will find yourself ignoring the calendar and reading on and on. But then you can start over, for it is just that meaningful. 5.95 in hardback only.

The 9th Annual Unity Forum will be held in Nashville, July 4-6, in the chapel of Scarritt College. This is in the heart of the university complex of Vanderbilt-Peabody and within walking distance of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, where a guided tour is planned. Rooms can be had at Scarritt for only 5.00 per night per person. This is ideal vacation talk for concerned Christians, and we hope you'll plan to be with us. Program and participants will be announced later but you can get any information by writing to Stanley Hime, 1 225 Lone Oak Rd., Nashville 3721 5, or calling him at 615-297-5043.

The editors of *Living for Jesus* (Box 103, Farmington, N. M. 87401) would like to send 100 of our readers sample copies of their publication. It is for children, well illustrated and relevant. We urge you to write for this and look it over, for it could well be used in the home or congregation.

The Christian, the main organ of the Disciples of Christ, has changed its name and format for 1974. It is now *The Disciple,* and it continues a tradition that dates back to the time when Campbell still lived, known then as *Gospel Echo* (1863). Dr. Kenneth Teegarden is the new president and general minister of the restructured church. In an interview with *The Disciple* he identified the issues facing the Disciples as: world order, justice and peace, evangelism and renewal, leadership, reconciliation, and ecumenical involvement. The inclusion of evangelism is noteworthy, for some leading Disciples have long complained that they have largely ignored this part of the church's mission.

President McCord of Princeton Seminary (Presbyterian), in writing to his fellow-ministers, said: "There is a fresh wind blowing through the Church today, and I am convinced it is the wind of the Spirit. Its effect can be seen in renewed lives and awakened congregations." He identifies the changes taking place as the recovery of transcendence, a new evangelism that aims to change persons and structures, the discovery of Christ as more human and therefore more divine, and a ministry that is concerned for the whole of life. He believes the changes are for real and should not be interpreted as a "back to God and to Adam Smith" movement.

Fellowship, published by a joint committee of Disciples, Christian Church brethren, and concerned ones in Churches of Christ, has now issued its third number, including an article by Warren Lewis on *Must the Charismatic Movement Be Divisive?* You may subscribe for 2.00 (clubs of 5 or more, 1.00 each) by writing to Fellowship, 1699 Court St., NE, Salem, OR 97301.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

In its March issue *Church and State* carried an article by our own Norman Parks entitled "Heroin for Our Colleges," which originally appeared in *Mission.* The article reveals how Church of Christ colleges, especially Lipscomb and Abilene, have been vigorous in obtaining federal grants, except for Florida College, which has rejected all tax dollars, and all this in contradiction to the avowed purposes of said institutions as religious. "It cannot be doubted that the First Amendment as defined by the court is being violated by these schools," Parks says. *Church and State* is a publication dedicated to the principle of the separation of church and state.

Krister Stendahl of Harvard reports on a trip to Australia where he met with a student movement. The topic of study was "Never Finished with Jesus," which Krister describes as "a disarmingly simple term for a serious study." He says he looks to the day when the Spirit will enable Catholics to play a part in healing the break between evangelical and liberal protestants, presumably at home as well as in Australia.

A 21-year old California mother tells of how she was abducted, along with her small child, when she returned to her car at a shopping center. While her assailant disrobed her, she prayed to the Lord: "Dear God, have mercy on this poor man, for in the end he will truly be punished for what he is doing. I pray in Jesus' name, Amen!" Rather than rape her, the man put her clothes back on her, returned her and the baby to the shopping center, and fled. She was left praising God for answering prayer.

The Holland Street Church of Christ in San Marcos, Texas, which could well be called one of our "free" churches, has issued a letter stating its position on the Bible, the gospel, the church, worship, doctrine, morality and customs, and opinions. As for the Bible they say: "We argue that the slogan "No Creed but Christ's should be taken seriously, and that each individual has the freedom and responsibility of interpreting the Bible to the best of his ability. The Church existed and prospered for 200 years before the New Testament as presently known was accumulated; therefore, Christians may very well be pleasing to God without understanding of or complete agreement on the exact meaning of every verse." You may solicit a copy from Prof. Elton Abernathy, Southwest Texas State U., San Marcos, Texas.

One of our Church of Christ girls in Bossier City, La. is an expert bassoon player at Louisiana Tech, but she caused her director and fellow band members no little consternation when she refused to participate in a rendition of "Jesus Christ Superstar" at a sporting event. She suffered intimidation for awhile, but it was finally decided not to play Superstar. In the end the band director had such high regard for the young lady that he wrote a letter to her parents commending them "for raising such a fine young lady," which was apparently as much a victory for the director as for the girl.

In a recent edit oral in *Firm Foundation*, the editor had this to say about church renewal: "We who boast of a non-sectarian position ought to practice it. Let no word be said; let no article for any paper be written; let no sermon be preached that would wound or mutilate any portion of the body. Let us put from our minds and from our expressions any thought of splits and divisions and 'sides' and 'points of view' and act like the children of God ... It is a sick mentality that sees in every difference of opinion between brethren a quarrel or a split. Some are so sectarian in spirit that they gloat over spinning off another sect or splintering another splinter, or being able to split the already meager forces in some mission field, or being able to catch in their web another preacher."

Ron Milton of the Lake Highlands Church of Christ in Dallas recently quoted in his bulletin a line from G. Dallas Smith in the 1933 ACC Lectures to the effect that “the most dangerous character in our midst is one whose heart and conscience have been left untouched.”

The elders of the Burke Road Church of Christ in Houston are presently using the study hour on Lord’s Day to meet privately with three families of the congregation each time, until they have shared in this way with all the flock.

The Sweet Co. in Austin recently announced its 1974 Vacation Bible School materials, entitled “We Praise the Lord.” Of the eight writers who produced the series six of them are women.

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